



# Oklahoma News



## Recent Success

### Ft. Sill Private Lands Initiative

The Ft. Sill Private Lands Initiative is a partnership of over 20 interest groups, federal, state, and local government agencies, Native American tribes and other organizations dedicated to conserving natural resources around Ft. Sill and Lawton, Oklahoma while protecting the ability of the United States Army to use Ft. Sill as a training base. Under the Army Compatible Use Buffering program the land trust partner, Land Legacy of Oklahoma, acquires conservation easements on property surrounding Ft. Sill to ensure that the use of the land in the future will be compatible with both the mission of the base and the conservation of habitat, agricultural value, water and air quality, and other natural resource goals. In the

past six months the project protected some 650 acres of land through transactions valued at over \$1.8 million. These transactions were funded through contributions of the U.S. Army, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Governor of Oklahoma, and the Comanche County Economic Development Corporation.

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*Partner: Land Legacy*

### RTCA PROGRAM

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. RTCA staff provides technical assistance to community groups and local, state, and federal government agencies working to protect natural areas and water resources and enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities. We help communities plan, organize partnerships, and achieve on-the-ground success on projects they initiate. By investing in the protection of special places, recreation, tourism, and well planned development, local leaders can bring long-lasting economic and quality of life benefits to their communities.

*"RTCA is the linchpin of this entire effort. RTCA opened doors to the military, local and state government which were closed to us, and brought together one of the most effective partnerships I've ever seen."*

*--Robert Gregory, Executive Director of Land Legacy*

## Current/Recent Projects

### Eastern Oklahoma Watersheds Conference

Trout Unlimited in partnership with Land Legacy enlisted the support of RTCA for a first of its kind "summit" focusing on the conditions, benefits, and threats to water resources in the

major watersheds of Eastern Oklahoma. RTCA is providing planning facilitation and will facilitate portions of a meeting bringing activist groups, agricultural interests, governmental representatives, and concerned citizens together to network and build lines of

communication to begin overcoming suspicions and distrust that arise from conflicting interests in the region.

*NPS Contact: Steve Bonner  
Partners: Trout Unlimited and Land Legacy*

# Current/Recent Projects

## Roger Mills Gateway Community Project

RTCA worked with Roger Mills County, the Town of Cheyenne, Roger Mills Arts & Humanities Council, Washita Battlefield National Historical Site, US Forest Service, and Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce to establish a Gateway Community Plan that addressed the natural, cultural, and recreational needs of the county. A key component of this plan was to develop a walking trail system throughout the entire county, especially linking the Town of Cheyenne with the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site and the Black Kettle National Grasslands.

*NPS Contact: Steve Bonner*

*Partner: Roger Mills Gateway Community Committee*



Assistant Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Installations and the Environment seals the deal for the first 300 acres of conservation land outside Ft. Sill with Landowner A.J. Ryder

### 1. Tulsa Arkansas River Bottomlands

The Tulsa Arkansas River Bottomlands project marries the goals of prime farmland conservation with access for public trails in the fastest growing area of the Tulsa metropolitan area. RTCA supports a partnership consisting of Land Legacy, the Indian Nations Council of Governments, City of Tulsa, City of Broken Arrow, City of Bixby, local agricultural extension and other interests groups to extend the benefits of the famed Arkansas River Trails system an additional 10 miles downriver, and provide a connector between this system and the Osage Prairie Trail, a rails to trails conversion project supported by RTCA in the past. In addition, the partnership hopes to preserve as much as possible of the unique agricultural resources of the area, soils which have been identified as the richest remaining in the State of Oklahoma.

*NPS Contact: Steve Bonner*

*Partner: Land Legacy*